

## Caribbean Unions meet to tackle RBTT

UNI Global Union Caribbean Unions including the Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union met in Barbados recently and formalised the Caribbean Finance Union Network. The group regional trade unions operating in the finance sector will strategically deal with issues and challenges of the Caribbean Finance Sector and seek to build Caribbean and Global Solidarity for its efforts. A planned strategic response to the Royal Bank of Canada in the aftermath of its acquisition of the RBTT and RBC's Banks of the Caribbean was also discussed.

Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) has returned to the Caribbean and as a multinational, is now refusing to meet UNI Caribbean Unions on a regional basis. In addition to this retrograde refusal, RBC is forcing the "roll out" of its various plans and policies onto the workers in some organised areas, insisting on the rationale that workers in the larger Head Offices in Trinidad and Tobago and also Bahamas (yet to be organised) have both already accepted the said policies.

With grand plans ongoing to "recast" the organisation, the replacement of many regional managers by Head Office personnel, has had a negative impact on established relationships with the Unions and the drastic centralisation of decision-making has made regional management almost redundant. This is also hindering the effective practice of good industrial relations within the established and cultural norms of the various territories.

The new IT Platform is reported to be contributing to the breakdown of family life of many young workers as they are forced into overtime because of frequent problems as they operate in an environment of fear that their jobs are in danger. The UNI Caribbean Finance Network intends to promote and utilize both regional and global Solidarity in dealing with the banks of the Caribbean. Both RBTT Trinidad and Tobago and RBC Bahamas are currently targeted for unionisation by UNI affiliates BIGWU and BFSU as a high priority.

TREVOR JOHNSON  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
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